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In this fourth Rattling the Cages panel discussion, Eric King, dequi kioni-sadiki, and Harold Taylor discuss the significance and relevance of Black August today, and the importance of political prisoner support.

This event is a fundraiser for the Jericho Movement.

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RATTLING THE CAGES

ORAL HISTORIES OF NORTH AMERICAN POLITICAL PRISONERS

"Black August & Prisoner Support"

HAROLD TAYLOR | dequi kioni-sadiki | ERIC KING

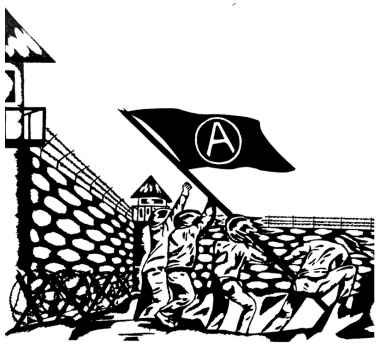
Originally hosted as a live conversation by Firestorm Books,
recording available on Firestorm's youtube channel:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z1Tx_28l71I
August 27, 2024

Published by AK Press, *Rattling the Cages: Oral Histories of North American Political Prisoners* is a project of abolitionists Josh Davidson and Eric King. The book is filled with the experience and wisdom of over thirty current and former North American political prisoners. It provides first-hand details of prison life and the political commitments that continue to lead prisoners into direct confrontation with state authorities and institutions.

Transcription, editing, and formatting by ev, Danielle, Josh, & Jeremy with help from Firestorm Books.

all labor volunteered

with whatever weapons at hand



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Visit your local Books Through Bars group and send books to those incarcerated (*booksthroughbarsnyc.org/resources*).

Join your nearest Anarchist Black Cross group (*abcf.net*).

Visit *rattlingthecages.com* to learn more.

dequi kioni-sadiki is a Coordinating Committee member of the Spirit of Mandela Coalition, the former chair of the Malcolm X Commemoration Committee, and leader of the Sekou Odinga Defense Committee which waged a successful campaign for the release of her husband. A consistent coalition-builder and organizer, dequi is a retired educator with the NYC Department of Education and a member of the Jericho Movement to Free All Political Prisoners. She co-edited *Look for Me in the Whirlwind: From the Panther 21 to 21st Century Revolutions* (2019) and is a contributor to *Black Power After Lives: The Enduring Significance of the Black Panther Party* (2020).

Harold Taylor joined the LA chapter of the Black Panther Party in 1967 and spent much time in jail for his part in the Black liberation struggle. He was arrested in 1973 in New Orleans and charged along with others in a 1971 attack on a police station in San Francisco. The case was dismissed after it surfaced that the defendants were brutally tortured by the police. In 2007, Harold was arrested again in connection to the decades-old case along with seven other men, known collectively as the San Francisco 8. Charges were eventually dropped against Taylor and others, though two other former Panthers pleaded to lesser charges.

Eric King is a father, poet, author, and activist. Last December, he was released from the supermax ADX prison after spending nearly ten years as a political prisoner for an act of protest over the police murder of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri. He was held in solitary confinement for years and was met with violence by guards throughout his incarceration. Eric has published three zines: *Battle Tested* (2015), *Antifa in Prison* (2019), and *Pacing in My Cell* (2019). His sentencing statement is included in the book *Defiance: Anarchist Statements Before Judge and Jury* (2019). Eric now works as a paralegal for the Bread and Roses Legal Center.

Libertie Valance: Welcome everybody! My name is Libertie, and I'm a member of the Firestorm Collective. We're really excited to be hosting this conversation as part of the *Rattling the Cages* series, specifically this one for Black August, which you may know is a month-long commemoration of Black resistance, paying tribute to the lives and sacrifices of captured freedom fighters.

Firestorm, the collective I'm part of, is a 16-year-old radical bookstore owned and operated by a queer feminist collective here in southern Appalachia, on the land of the Cherokee people. We strive to feature books and events that reflect our interests and the needs of marginalized communities in the South. We're also continuing to do a fair number of these types of events online, both because it expands the range of what we're able to do and also because we know virtual events remain a lot more accessible for many folks in our community.

Tonight's event is a fundraiser for the Jericho Movement, which has been fighting to win amnesty and freedom for political prisoners for over 25 years. I think as of this afternoon it looked like we've raised, with your help, about $200.

It's a huge honor and pleasure to have the three of you all with us tonight. I'm really looking forward to hearing from all of you. I'm going to go ahead now and pass it off to Eric.

Eric King: Glad to be here! dequi and Harold, the main topic of this talk—even though we're going to stray from it, of course—is Black August, which we're celebrating right now. I was wondering if you two could both tell us, or share with us, the first times that you heard of that concept, or the first time you celebrated, or the first time that you participated in a Black August, and what it meant to you then, and perhaps what it means to you now?

Harold Taylor: Black August to me. First, I was here in Los Angeles in 1965, in August of 1965, when the Watts Riot started, when over 30 something Black people were killed in that riot. I was just 17 years old at the time. Me and my friends, we went up on Avalon and 114th Street, 112th, from that area where it started, where it initiated at, to participate in that rebellion. Even though they called it a riot, we called it a rebellion, because of the conditions that we were forced to live up under, under the segregation,

Rattling the Cages

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Eric King, Herman Bell, David Gilbert, Susan Rosenberg

2). Continuing the Struggle Inside & Out
Eric King, Ashanti Alston, Ray Luc Levasseur

3) Antifascism Behind Bars
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4) Black August & Prisoner Support
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5) Eric King in Conversation with James Kilgore
Eric King, James Kilgore

6) Post-Prison Activism & Archiving Resistance
Eric King, Jake Conroy, Claude Marks

7) Until All Are Free
Eric King, Jason Hammond, Jeremy Hammond

8) Revolutionary Women Behind Bars
Eric King, Linda Evans, Laura Whitehorn, Nicole Kissane

9) Becoming Politicized in Prison
Eric King, Josh Davidson, Hector Rodriguez, Farhan Ahmed

10) Rattling the Cages: How We Dit It & How You Can Too
Eric King, Sara Falconer, Josh Davidson

11) Abolition Is a Family Affair
Eric King, Sharon Shoatz, susie day, Rochell Bricker

12) Looking Back at the George Jackson Brigade
Mark Cook, Janine Bertram, Eric King

all conversations are available @FirestormCoop on youtube

Write to Political Prisoners mentioned in this conversation

for a monthly updated list of political prisoners & their addresses visit

nycabc.wordpress.com

the police brutality, and the unlawfulness of the police and the businessmen in the community that were jacking up prices in the community—just the unsafe things that happened in the community, all at the same time, during that time. That was the first time I had experience with Black August.

I understand that it also was named because of Marcus Garvey. I think his birthday is in August, and also a number of different incidents that took place in August. Also the death of Jonathan Jackson, when he went into the courtroom in Marin County to free his brother, George. And a lot of people hardly ever mention the other brothers, William Christmas and Ruchell Magee. They were there the day that Jonathan decided to take matters in his own hands. He was a brave young soldier. I had an opportunity to meet John as a young man. He used to come to the Panther office quite a bit—very enthusiastic, very dedicated, and loyal to his brother. Him and his whole family, they were great contributors to the local festivities in the community and the liberation struggle. All them and Angela Davis were part of it, too, but they were in different parts of the city. I mainly worked out of the office here in Los Angeles. And Black August started with that, with George getting killed, being assassinated.

Maybe you didn't know it or not, but that police raid took place a week after George was killed. That raid on a police station took place a week after George was killed, and I was charged with that murder, incarcerated in Los Angeles on that murder. I was incarcerated for a shooting incident with the Los Angeles Police Department. The FBI and the criminal conspiracy section at LAPD set myself up and two other brothers to be assassinated. This was September 10, 1971, at nine o'clock in the evening. I was in the car with two other brothers, pulled over by the LAPD and the SWAT team, and they opened fired on us. They shot in the car over 250 times. We all survived. We went to court. And this all came back from August. That's when I was charged with the murder in San Francisco, but they never brought me to San Francisco, because we bailed out of jail after spending two years just fighting to get the bail reduced.

Eric King: dequi, why don't you jump in and tell us your experiences with the history of Black August?

dequi kioni-sadiki: I learned about Black August not so much as a celebration but as a commemoration of Black resistance. As you started

out, the history of Black August, political prisoners, Black resistance, and people who gave their lives and people who have been murdered and imprisoned by the state. I think one of the things that, when Harold was speaking, is important to note is that the Attica Rebellion was also then. There were things happening inside the prisons after the murder of George Jackson. Before that people had been organized, so I think one of the important things about Black August is for people to understand that it started in the inside. Brothers were organizing inside the prisons, and then it came to the outside.

I found out about it in the '90s. I was never a member of the Black Panther Party, but I was a member of an organization, a collective, called the Black Panther Collective. The Black Panther Collective was made up of veteran members of the Black Panther Party and newer activists. It was about carrying on the legacy of the Black Panther Party. That was my introduction to political prisoners. Before that I had no idea that political prisoners existed in this country.

We are taught the mythology of US history and the idea that freedom and democracy is what makes this nation work. And that's the furthest thing from the truth. The Black Panther Collective was my introduction to political prisoners. They were about carrying on the legacy of the Black Panther Party. It was Cop Watch, watching the police's interaction with people, feeding people in the community. I was in New York, so it was visiting political prisoners in New York that was both my introduction to political prisoners as well as my introduction to Black August. The Malcolm X Grassroots Movement used to do hip-hop concerts that were a commemoration of Black August with a multitude of hip-hop artists talking about freedom. It was also to raise money to support political prisoners. That's how a lot of people found out about Black August, because it was called Black August Hip-Hop Festival.

Eric King: Awesome. Something you mentioned, you talked about how you used to go and visit prisoners, how you started that in the '90s. Could you expand on what prisoner support looked like to you then, and what maybe is different about it now?

dequi kioni-sadiki: I think that what's different now, thankfully, and it took 30 years from my introduction to political prisoners for more people to talk about political prisoners, particularly for Black Liberation Army

American as cherry pie," as well as once stating that "If America don't come around, we're gonna burn it down." In 1968, Jamil went underground after facing weapons and incitement to riot charges following a rally that occurred in Cambridge, Maryland which left Jamil with a shotgun wound to the head. After 18 months in hiding and on the FBI's Most Wanted list, Jamil resurfaced in an attack of a New York City bar which was targeted for its exploitation of the community. This action resulted in a shootout with police that left Jamil and two cops with injuries. Jamil subsequently spent 5 years in prison for charges related to the incident. Upon his release, Jamil opened a grocery store in Atlanta, which he maintained until 2000 when he was arrested for the murder of a Fulton County cop. Later that year, another man confessed to the shooting. In 2002 Jamil, was convicted and sentenced to life without parole. *For more information*: whathappened2rap.com

San Francisco Eight — eight former Black Panthers were arrested January 23rd 2007 in California, New York and Florida on charges related to the 1971 killing of a San Francisco police officer. Similar charges were thrown out after it was revealed that police used torture to extract confessions when some of these same men were arrested in New Orleans in 1973. Richard Brown, Richard O'Neal, Ray Boudreaux, and Hank Jones were arrested in California. Francisco Torres was arrested in Queens, New York. Harold Taylor was arrested in Florida. Two of those charged were political prisoners at the time—Herman Bell and Jalil Muntaqim are both in New York State prisons. Harold Taylor and John Bowman (recently deceased) as well as Ruben Scott (thought to be a government witness) were first charged in 1975. But a judge tossed out the charges, finding that Taylor and his two co-defendants made statements after police in New Orleans tortured them for several days employing electric shock, cattle prods, beatings, sensory deprivation, plastic bags and hot, wet blankets for asphyxiation.

Minister" of the Black Panther Party, and last as a leader of the All-African People's Revolutionary Party (A-APRP). Kwame was one of the original SNCC freedom riders of 1961, and a major voting rights activist in Mississippi and Alabama after being mentored by Ella Baker and Bob Moses, but became disillusioned with the two-party system after the 1964 Democratic National Convention failed to recognize the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party. SNCC conducted its first actions against the military draft and the Vietnam War under Kwame's leadership. He popularized the oft-repeated anti-draft slogan "Hell no, we won't go!" during this time. Kwame privately took credit for pushing Martin Luther King toward anti-imperialism. During this period, he traveled and lectured extensively throughout the world, visiting Guinea, North Vietnam, China, and Cuba. He became more clearly identified with the Black Panther Party as its "Honorary Prime Minister." Kwame remained in Guinea after his separation from the Black Panther Party. He continued to travel, write, and speak in support of international leftist movements. In 1971 he published his collected essays in a second book, *Stokely Speaks: Black Power Back to Pan-Africanism*. This book expounds an explicitly socialist Pan-African vision, which he retained for the rest of his life. For the final 30 years of his life, Kwame was devoted to the All-African People's Revolutionary Party (A-APRP). His mentor Kwame Nkrumah had many ideas for unifying the African continent, and Kwame extended the scope of these ideas to the entire African diaspora. He was a Central Committee member during his association with the A-APRP and made many speeches on the party's behalf. Kwame passed away in Guinea in 1998.

Mumia Abu Jamal — an award winning journalist and was one of the founders of the Black Panther Party chapter in Philadelphia, PA. He has struggled for justice and human rights for people of color since he was at least 14 years old, the age when he joined the Party. In December of 1982, Mumia, who moonlighted by driving a taxi, happened upon police who were beating his brother. During the melee, a police officer was shot and killed. Despite the fact that many people saw someone else shoot and runaway from the scene, Mumia, in what could only be called a kangaroo court, was convicted and sentenced to death. During the summer of 1995, a death warrant was signed by Governor Tom Ridge, which sparked one of the most effective organizing efforts in defense of a political prisoner ever. Since that time, Mumia has had his death sentence overturned, but is still expected to serve the rest of his life in prison. Mumia has written numerous books, including *Live from Death Row*, *Death Blossoms: Reflections from a Prisoner of Conscience*, *We Want Freedom: A Life in the Black Panther Party*, and has for many years continued his journalism on Prison Radio *For more information*: freemumia.com

Imam Jamil Al-Amin — formerly known as H. Rap Brown, the Imam came to prominence in the 1960s as chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and the Justice Minister of the Black Panther Party. He is perhaps most famous for his proclamation during that period that "violence is as

political prisoners. When I first found out about political prisoners we had seven just in New York state, seven or eight in New York state. There were periods of virtually no support for political prisoners, because one of the things that the state did was terrorize people into not supporting political prisoners, not being active. They made an example out of our captured freedom fighters and criminalized them. They were harassing and stalking, helicopters were flying over people's homes, and people were losing their jobs. And the FBI and police were visiting people's homes. That was terrorizing people into silence.

What I saw then was there wasn't this whole big breadth, there were segments of the population, like pockets of resistance, and people carrying on the radical tradition of resistance who visited political prisoners. But I know from talking to political prisoners that there were times when they had no support, because people would say, "Oh, but weren't they convicted of killing a police officer?" Which, we hold that that's irrelevant, because it's a struggle. It's the freedom struggle, and we have a right to resist, whether it's armed or otherwise. What the Black Panther Party did was resist and defend the community. They defended children by feeding hungry children. They defended cash poor and working class communities by feeding hungry people, by providing healthcare to people who did not have it.

There are many ways to defend the people, but if you look at the Black Panther Party 10-Point Platform and Program, they were real clear about ending the police terror and murder of Black people. Some people were framed, and some people acted in military operations against this capitalist oppressive system. We said and we believed that, and many others believe that. It's irrelevant what they were convicted of. They shouldn't be in prison. Even by the US government's own standards and own laws, people have a right to fight against tyranny and oppression. When it comes to Black folks, it is criminalized. It's been criminalized from the days of Harriet Tubman right on up to today. That's why we have political prisoners, because resistance, Black resistance in particular, down to the nitty-gritty, are criminalized.

I've seen a change, because one of the things we used to say, and I always said this when I would go to speak, that, because from '91 until 2024, I've been aware of political prisoners. I've been working with, advocating for, supporting, visiting, writing, hosting, organizing events on their behalf,

writing letters, sending faxes to prisons when they were mistreating and abusing political prisoners to try to get them medical treatment. Because they try... Well, you know, Eric, they try to murder you inside prison. We have to have the support so people have eyes on them. In saying that, for so long people who call themselves activists and organizers marginalized political prisoners. They weren't a part of their platform, and there are those of us who used to say, "You cannot call yourself an activist or radical or revolutionary and not include political prisoners in your platform, because they are in prison, because, whether you're talking about homelessness, hunger, miseducation, lack of healthcare, every single thing that people struggle for or against, that's what political prisoners are imprisoned for. We are remiss. We are derelict in our duties to them and to ourselves when we don't support them."

I see a difference now. I see more people talking about political prisoners and adding them to their platforms, and I'm happy for that. What I'm sad about is so many people gave their lives where people didn't know who they were, and people still don't know who they are. But they gave their lives to the Black Freedom Struggle, whether they were white anti-imperialists, whether they were Black New Afrikans, whoever. People gave their lives for the struggle, for people's self-determination and liberation, and it breaks my heart that there are people who were murdered behind the wall, that people don't know their names. But they sacrificed a whole lot, so I see that as different.

Eric King: One of the things that still works my heart out is thinking about all of my comrades behind the bars right now, that no one will ever know their names, and it really sucks. Also, every cop is a target, and every cop is a legitimate target.

Harold, I don't know if you heard the question, but I was asking what your history with prison support is, and how you've seen it change throughout the decades, if you have.

Harold Taylor: Well, I've never been to prison, but I've been to county jail, but there's not much difference from prisons. They're going to isolate anywhere. Anyway, that's been most of my time in isolation in jailhouses across this country. But in San Diego, I was arrested down there for selling Black Panther newspapers and organizing. While in jail there, the split came about in the Party, and when I came out of jail, political prisoners

William Kunstler — a white radical lawyer known for defending such revolutionaries in court as the Attica Brothers, members of the Black Liberation Army (BLA), Weather Underground Organization (WUO), American Indian Movement (AIM), and other revolutionaries. William played an important role as a civil-rights lawyer in the 1960s, traveling to many of the segregated battlegrounds to work to free those who had been jailed. Working on behalf of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), Kunstler defended the Freedom Riders in Mississippi in 1961. William was a director of the ACLU from 1964 to 1972, when he became a member of the ACLU National Council. In 1966, he co-founded the Center for Constitutional Rights. William also worked with the National Lawyers Guild.

Herman Bell — a former member of both the Black Panther Party and the Black Liberation Army, and he was imprisoned for forty-five years. Herman was captured in New Orleans in 1973, and eventually he, Jalil Muntaqim, and Albert Nuh Washington were convicted of attacks on police. Herman was also implicated in the San Francisco 8 case and pleaded guilty to a lesser offense. He spent five years imprisoned in the federal system, in the Marion control unit for two of those years, before spending decades in various New York State maximum security prisons. While imprisoned he was committed to community work, and he is a founding member of the Victory Gardens Project and the Certain Days Collective. He released in 2018, after his eighth parole hearing.

Abdul Majid — in 1968, Abdul Majid joined the Black Panther Party, having been previously active with the Grass Roots Advisory Council. Abdul was involved in many of the community-based projects of the BPP including the free health clinic and free breakfast for children program. After the Party was destroyed by the U.S. government, Abdul continued his political work as a paralegal with Bronx Legal Services. On April 16th, 1981 a van was pulled over by NYPD. Two occupants exited the van and fired upon the cops—one was killed, the other injured. Despite claims by the police that the van was pulled over for connections to burglaries, the folder of "suspects" circulated by the cops exclusively consisted of former Panthers, not burglary suspects. Abdul and his co-defendant, Bashir Hameed were arrested and tried three times. The first trial ended in a hung jury. The second trial was declared a mistrial by the judge immediately after the jury rendered a decision that acquitted Bashir on the murder charge. At a third trial, the state finally got its way—Abdul was convicted of murder and sentenced to 33 years to life. Abdul passed away in prison on April 3, 2016, after 33 years in prison.

Kwame Ture — formerly known as Stokely Carmichael, Kwame was a Black revolutionary who played a major role in the Black liberation movement in the United States and the global pan-African movement. He was a key leader in the development of the Black Power movement, first while leading the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), then as the "Honorary Prime

outreach programs supported by the group Venceremos and began after the escape from prison by Donald DeFreeze, who took the name "General Field Marshal Cinque." Most famously, the SLA kidnapped newspaper heiress Patty Hearst in 1974 in an attempt to free two of their own from prison. After this was rejected, they successfully bargained with the Hearst family to provide a free food distribution program in impoverished areas of LA. Kathleen Soliah was arrested by the FBI after 21 years underground. On November 8, 2002, James Kilgore was arrested in South Africa, where he had become a radical union organizer, after having been underground since 1975.

Kamau Sadiki — a former member of the Black Liberation Army (BLA), who is currently serving a life sentence for the killing of an Atlanta police officer in 1971. With the US counter-insurgency program COINTELPRO that attempted to neutralize and destroy revolutionary organizations like the Black Panther Party, many members felt they had no choice but to go underground or risk imprisonment and death, which Sadiki did in 1971. In 1973 he was captured as part of a federal stakeout for a bank expropriation and was tried with his co-defendant Assata Shakur—which ended first in a mistrial and after a second trial with a jury acquittal. In 1974, he was tried in another bank expropriation, found guilty, and sentenced to 5 years in prison. During these trials, Assata was pregnant with a child she shared with Kamau. She would later escape to Cuba. Kamau's case was part of a renewed campaign during the early 2000's to target former revolutionaries from the 1960s and 70s. Kamau has claimed his innocence, stating that the government refused to allow testimony that would exonerate him and used his case as a way to pressure Kamau to help in capturing Assata. Kamau was convicted and sentenced in 2003. His health continues to deteriorate to this day, and support for his liberation is crucial. *For more information*: freekamau.com

Dr. Mutulu Shakur — a Black Liberation Army political prisoner who was sentenced to 60 years in prison for his involvement in the Brinks robbery. Dr. Shakur was active as a teen in the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM), a Black Nationalist group that struggled for Black self-determination and socialist change in America. Dr. Shakur also worked very closely with the Black Panther Party, supporting Lumumba and Zayd Shakur. He was a member of the Provisional Government of the Republic of New Afrika, which endorsed the founding of an independent New Afrikan (Black) Republic and the establishment of an independent Black state in the southern US. In the 70's Dr. Shakur worked with the Lincoln Detox program, which offered drug rehabilitation for heroin addiction using acupuncture. Dr. Shakur was one of several Black Liberation Army members to carry out the October 1981 Brinks robbery, aided by the May 19 Communist Organization and former members of the Weather Underground. In June 2022, it was revealed that Dr. Shakur had terminal bone marrow cancer with "six months to live." Dr. Shakur passed away from the disease on July 7, 2023, at age 72, about eight months after being paroled.

were being abandoned. The Party had to split, and there was a lot of confusion. I didn't know which way was up with the Party, but I know I didn't join the Black Panther Party to kill Black people.

They had turned upon themselves and started hurting Black people. They politically abandoned Romaine Chip Fitzgerald. He's my homie, he's my brother, and my comrade. He was just 19 years old when he went to prison, and he was spent five years on Death Row. From Death Row he get commuted to a life sentence, but he died in prison. He just died a few years ago. So many have. Nuh Washington, he died in prison in New York. These are all good brothers, all dedicated comrades, that the Party abandoned to COINTELPRO. COINTELPRO was not really discovered until after people broke into that office outside Philadelphia, an FBI office, and found all those papers and gave it to the Church Committee. The Church Committee investigated the FBI imprisoning a lot of people and taking us from different parts—you're not supposed to go from one county to another county, they're supposed to be held in the county. But they'd relocated me to different jails just to keep me from communicating with people. They want to break that line of communications and send you as far away from home as possible. They don't want you to have any support.

But the letters that you get from total strangers, you just don't understand what a lift that gives you on those dark days, on those cold mornings when you're trying to drink that nasty crap they call coffee just to avoid the food and eat a piece of bread, and you've got one letter from a total stranger who sends you some warm words. People have to support political prisoners, because they're fighting for the people, and every one of them doesn't really look for anything in return.

We understood that once we were captured, it was on us to figure out how we was going to get out of it. Sometimes fellow comrades came to our aid, which was beautiful. Some of them came to bail us out of jail one time, which was beautiful, and it gave us an opportunity to get back and continue some of the work. But it's very necessary to support political prisoners because they exist throughout the United States. A lot of them are never mentioned. That's right. For all political living conditions and the mental torture and how strong you have to be up in that place, It's a challenging thing. I've seen broken men. I've seen men just lose it under the pressure.

Eric King: dequi, I'd like to ask you, and then Harold, what did support look like pre-internet, pre-social media? What was supporting prisoners like before you had Instagram or Facebook or things like that?

Harold Taylor: We had a mimeograph machine, you know? [*Laughter all around.*]

dequi kioni-sadiki: Some of the people here may not even know what that is, brother.

Harold Taylor: I know, but you had black ink on your hands all the time because of the fliers to announce political prisoners, to announce the programs, and everything we were trying to do. Our first newspaper wasn't really like a newspaper that you guys see. They were like mimeographed prints stapled together. And we sold those papers for a dime. I wish I had them now, they'd be worth a lot of money.

dequi kioni-sadiki: I think that's such a good question, because the technology is good, but it must not replace human contact. When Harold said he was selling papers, he was on the streets selling papers. That meant he was looking at people in the eye. He was touching people. He was talking to people. He was interacting. In the '90s, when I moved back to New York, it was in the streets, it was in parks, it was tabling at places.

I remember when Melvin Van Peebles, or Mario, that's the son, they did a movie called *Panther*. This was before the 'Wakanda' stuff, but we were at movie theaters tabling, at movie theaters talking to people about real Panthers, not the movie version. And we did the same thing when 'Wakanda' came out. We were in movie theaters saying, "Okay, you saw a fictionalized account. That's Hollywood. But this is the real deal."

We held letter writing monthly. In New York City we used to have the Guillermo Morales/Assata Shakur Community and Student Center which was at one of the City College campuses in Harlem. Both, we know, are in exile in Cuba. Assata was liberated by others. Guillermo was also liberated and escaped with the help of others. So, that Center was named after those two revolutionaries to link the correlation and the solidarity and connection between the Puerto Rican independence movement and the Black Freedom Struggle. Every month we had letter writing meetings, and we would send whoever, we had a list of whoever's birthday was for that

Nat Turner — led the Southampton Insurrection, a slave rebellion in Virginia, in August 1831. Nat Turner was enslaved in Southampton County, Virginia in the early 19th century. He thought that revolutionary violence was necessary for liberation. On an annular solar eclipse on February 12, 1831, Nat Turner envisioned this as a Black man's hand reaching over the sun and started the rebellion a week later, on August 21. The rebellion expanded from several trusted slaves to over 70 enslaved and free Blacks, some of whom were on horseback, armed with knives, hatchets, and blunt instruments. The state militia suppressed the rebellion at Belmont Plantation on the morning of August 23. The rebels killed between 55 and 65 white people before being defeated by the militia, making it the deadliest slave revolt in US history. The militia had twice the manpower of the rebels and three companies of artillery. Nat Turner was not captured and survived in hiding for more than 30 days afterward. To this day Nat Turner is recognized as a resistance hero for avenging the suffering of Africans and African Americans.

Denmark Vesey — a free Black man and community leader in Charleston, South Carolina, who planned a major slave revolt in 1822. Likely born into slavery in St. Thomas, Vesey was enslaved by Captain Joseph Vesey in Bermuda for some time before being brought to Charleston, where he won his freedom around the age of 32 but was unable to buy his wife and children out of slavery. His insurrection, which was to take place on Bastille Day, 14 July 1822, became known to thousands of blacks throughout Charleston, South Carolina, and along the Carolina coast. The plot called for Vesey and his group of enslaved people and free blacks to execute their enslavers and temporarily liberate the city of Charleston. Vesey and his followers planned to sail to Haiti to escape retaliation. Two enslaved men opposed to Vesey's scheme leaked the plot. Charleston authorities charged 131 men with conspiracy. In total, 67 men were convicted and 35 hanged, including Denmark.

Geronimo Pratt — Geronimo Ji-Jaga, affectionately known as "G," was a major figure in the Black Liberation Struggle. Recruited into the Black Panther Party by Bunchy Carter and John Huggins, both of whom were assassinated by COINTELPRO infiltrators in 1969. Geronimo became the Deputy Minister of Defense of the Souther California Black Panther Party. Geronimo was convicted on informant and infiltrators' false testimony for a murder he did not commit and spent 27 years in prison, until his conviction was vacated in 1997 on the grounds that the prosecution concealed exculpatory evidence. Geronimo continued to work for freedom for political prisoners, and in his later years moved to Tanzania, where he passed away in 2011.

Symbionese Liberation Army (SLA) — a revolutionary anti-imperialist guerrilla organization active in the 1970's. Six members died in a May 1974 shootout with police in Los Angeles, where some were burned alive after LAPD set the house they were in on fire. The SLA formed from people who met during prisoner

1973 and 1977 she was indicted ten times, resulting in seven different criminal trials. On November 2, 1979, Assata, after six years of imprisonment (where she birthed her daughter, Kakuya Shakur), escaped the Clinton Correctional Facility for Women in New Jersey when three members of the Black Liberation Army visiting her drew concealed .45-caliber pistols and a stick of dynamite, seized two correction officers as hostages, commandeered a van and (with the assistance of members of the May 19 Communist Organization) made their escape. Despite one of the largest police and FBI manhunts in history, Assata made her way to Cuba, where she has continued to reside to this day. Assata is the author of the books *Assata: An Autobiography*, *Still Black, Still Strong*, with Dhoruba bin Wahad and Mumia Abu-Jamal, and many articles and poems.

Sekou Odinga — Sekou was forced into hiding in 1969 when he and twenty other Black Panther Party members were wrongly charged with criminal conspiracy in the NY Panther 21 case. Several months later, while still underground, he traveled to Algeria to establish an international chapter of the Black Panther Party. Later, Sekou became an activist in the New Afrikan Independence Movement and a member of the Black Liberation Army. On October 23, 1981, Sekou and Mtyari Shabaka Sundiata were ambushed by the NYC police and FBI agents. The police murdered Mtyari. Sekou was eventually captured, tortured, and eventually charged with the liberation of Assata Shakur and the expropriation of money from an armored car. Sekou was convicted of two federal charges under the Racketeering Influenced and Corrupt Organization (RICO) Act and was sentence to forty years imprisonment and a $50,000 fine. He was also convicted of six state counts of attempted murder stemming from the defense of himself and Mtyari during the police attack in 1981. For this he was sentenced to concurrent life sentences. Sekou released from prison on November 25, 2014 and passed away on January 12, 2024, at the age of 79.

Sundiata Acoli — a New York Black Panther, he endured two years of prison awaiting trial for the Panther 21 Conspiracy Case. He and his comrades were eventually acquitted on all the bogus charges. The case was historic and a classic example of police and government attempting to neutralize organizations by incarcerating their leadership. As a result of this political attack and because of the immense pressure and surveillance from the FBI and local police Sundiata, like many other Panther leaders went "underground" with the Black Liberation Army. On May 2, 1973, Sundiata Acoli, Assata Shakur and Zayd Shakur were ambushed and attacked by state troopers on the New Jersey Turnpike. Assata was wounded and Zayd was killed. During the gun battle a state trooper was shot and killed in self-defense. Sundiata was tried in an environment of mass hysteria and convicted, although there was no credible evidence that he killed the trooper or had been involved in the shooting. Sundiata was sentenced to life in prison and was finally granted parole in May 2022 at the age of 85. *More information:* sundiataacoli.org

month and they got birthday cards. We chose political prisoners that everyone would write a letter to.

Those were some of the things that we did. It was really more hands on, in the street, going to churches and community-based organizations, wherever we could go to talk about our political prisoners. This is a good outlet but it should not replace what we really need to do because we are human beings and we need to connect with human beings. There's nothing like human interaction. Like what brother Harold was saying about what the prison does to separate us, and to have this disconnect, well, this social media does the same thing, because people get used to typing on the keyboard and looking at a screen, or looking at a recording, versus what does it mean to really connect with people. Going to visit political prisoners is important.

Visiting in New York state is a lot different than if someone is in federal. They make it difficult, like brother Harold said. Going to visit a political prisoner, really they mean for it to be exhausting. You can live in New York, down in the city, and then you have to travel. The last place that Sekou was in was seven hours away. All you need in New York state is an ID, but if you want to visit someone in the federal system, you have to be on their list. You've got to get permission to visit, and you have to have known them before they went to prison.

Some people are up for that level of intrusion, although this technology intrudes in our lives in every single way possible. People have their fingerprint on their phone, people have facial recognition, they have this AI, artificial intelligence. We have all these things that are intruding on our lives, but some people don't want that. When we would have letter writing, sometimes people were concerned about putting their address on the envelope—because they won't deliver the mail without a return address—so we used to use the Center's address as their return address. There are all these things that get in the way of the support of political prisoners unless people are really, really clear about the importance of doing that. And not so much because we're doing something for our political prisoners, but it's a benefit to us—we learn so much, we make a connection between the past, the present, and the future. It's like Dr. Clark said, "History is a time clock. It tells us where we were, where we are, and where we need to go."

That's the value and the importance of supporting political prisons. Everybody doesn't need to do the same thing. Some people can make phone calls to a prison to say, "So and so needs to see a doctor." Some people can drive a family member to go visit. Some people can donate for a plane ticket for a family member to go and visit. Our political prisoners don't come from rich families, they come from cash poor and working class families, and now this family has to support not just their family on the outside but their family on the inside. There are different levels of support, but the main thing is to provide and offer whatever level of support you can. I've always said, "Everybody can't do the same thing, but everybody can do something." And every political prisoner that I know, that I visit, that I've spoken with, have always said exactly what brother Harold said—getting a letter from someone that says, "I learned about you from this event. Thank you for your sacrifice. Thank you for your commitment." That means a lot, because it means that, though the state attempts to bury them alive, they are not buried, that they're still among the living.

Harold Taylor: Yeah, that's right. You're so right about that, sister. Man, I had to tell my mother I didn't want her to come up there to see me, because I couldn't stand the humiliation they would take her through, the way they talk to Black women, and the way they treat blacks in general. I couldn't handle that kind of shit, so I almost got in trouble. I encouraged my mother not to come, but, being my mother, she made sure my brother came there to see about whatever they want to do.

They look in the courtroom, and if they don't see anybody there, then they think nobody's going to miss you. But when you have people there, a family there, just five people just sitting there, they watch what they say, and they watch what they do, because they want to do it right.

Anyway, the basic thing about political prisoners is that it's a must that we take care of them and make them comfortable as we can, visit them as much as we can, and let them call. Get their phone calls, so they can touch base with their families. Those are key things. Those are the things that motivate you to continue that fight, because you know your sacrifice is worthwhile, and that you're still winning. You're not losing, not a failure. If you don't try, you already fail. I have always been motivated by the actions of my enemy—when I make them uncomfortable, I know I'm doing something right.

the New York 3. Their crime, in the eyes of this system, was their revolutionary politics and their determination to win the liberation of Black people. In secret, resources of the FBI and other authorities were mobilized to railroad these fighters to prison. He passed away from cancer in the US prison system on April 28, 2000.

COINTELPRO — a series of covert and illegal projects conducted between 1956 and 1971 by the FBI aimed at surveilling, infiltrating, discrediting, and disrupting radical American political organizations, most notioriously, civil rights and Black power movements, anti-Vietnam War organizers, the American Indian Movement, Chicano and Mexican-American movements, Puerto Rican independence movements, feminist organizations, and environmental and animal liberation groups. Beginning in 1969, leaders of the Black Panther Party were targeted by the COINTELPRO and "neutralized" by being assassinated, imprisoned, publicly humiliated or falsely charged with crimes. Some of the Black Panthers targeted include Fred Hampton, Mark Clark, Zayd Shakur, Geronimo Pratt, Mumia Abu-Jamal, and Marshall Conway. The program was secret until March 8, 1971, when the Citizens' Commission to Investigate the FBI broke into an FBI field office in Media, Pennsylvania, took several dossiers, and exposed the program by passing this material to news agencies.

Guillermo Morales — Puerto Rican freedom fighter Guillermo Morales was released on June 24 from a Mexican jail to travel to Cuba where he was granted political asylum. The Mexican government released Morales despite intense pressure from the US government for his extradition to the US to return to prison. Guillermo was serving a sentence of over 100 years when in April 1979 he escaped from the closely-guarded prison ward of New York City's Bellevue Hospital—a feat made all the more remarkable by the fact that he had lost most of both hands in an explosion. Guillermo was accompanied on this historic journey by former Puerto Rican Nationalist political prisoner Rafael Cancel Miranda and former political prisoner Pablo Marcano Garcia.

Assata Shakur — a Black revolutionary and a member of the Black Liberation Army (BLA) who escaped from prison and lives free as a maroon in Cuba. Assata became involved with Civil Rights protests while in community college in New York City in the mid-60's. After graduating from CCNY, she moved to Oakland, California, where she joined the Black Panther Party (BPP), working with the party to organize protests and community education programs. After returning to New York City, Assata led the BPP chapter in Harlem, coordinating the Free Breakfast for Children program, free clinics, and community outreach. Assata joined the BLA, an offshoot of the BPP whose members were inspired by Third World liberation struggles, engaging in guerilla warfare against the U.S. government for Black liberation. On May 2, 1973, Assata, along with Zayd Malik Shakur and Sundiata Acoli, were involved in a shootout with the police, during which Zayd was killed and Assata was wounded. After Assata's capture, between

Instead, there were various organizations and collectives working together and simultaneously independent of each other." The BLA would participate in attacks on police, expropriations, prison breaks (notably Assata), plane hijackings, and other actions in the struggle for Black liberation.

BPP 10-point program — 1. We want freedom. We want power to determine the destiny of our black and oppressed communities. 2. We want full employment for our people. 3. We want an end to the robbery by the capitalist of our black and oppressed communities. 4. We want decent housing, fit for the shelter of human beings. 5. We want education for our people that exposes the true nature of this decadent American society. We want education that teaches us our true history and our role in the present-day society. 6. We Want All Black Men To Be Exempt From Military Service. 7. We want an immediate end to police brutality and murder of black people, other people of color, all oppressed people inside the United States. 8. We want an immediate end to all wars of aggression. 9. We want freedom for all black and poor oppressed people now held in U.S. federal, state, county, city and military prisons and jails. 10. We want land, bread, housing, education, clothing, justice, peace and people's community control of modern technology.

Harriet Tubman — an abolitionist escaped slave who led some 13 missions to rescue approximately 70 enslaved people, including her family and friends, using the network of antislavery activists and safe houses known collectively as the Underground Railroad. During the American Civil War, she served as an armed scout and spy for the Union Army. In her later years, Tubman was an activist in the movement for women's suffrage. After the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 was passed, she helped guide escapees farther north into British North America (Canada), and helped newly freed people find work. Tubman met John Brown in 1858, and helped him plan and recruit supporters for his 1859 raid on Harpers Ferry.

Romaine Chip Fitzgerald — born and raised in Compton, California, Chip joined the Southern California Chapter of the Black Panther Party in early 1969 as a teenager who had just been released from the California Youth Authority. He was given 2 life sentences for the frame-up of the murder of a security guard and attempted murder of a CHP officer. Chip and his supporters believe the murder of Barge Miller was pinned on him because of his membership in the Black Panther Party and because of his previous altercations with the police. Unfortunately, before he achieved parole, Chip suffered a severe cardiovascular event in March 2021 and passed away in the hospital the following week.

Albert Nuh Washington — a member of the Black Panther Party and Black Liberation Army. In the early 1970s, after years active in the Black liberation struggle, Nuh was shot and captured together Jalil Muntaqim. Along with Herman Bell, they were charged with murdering two cops and became known as

Eric King: I love that. Something I experienced inside, and something I'm sure both of you have experienced, is how difficult the prison system makes it for people when they do visit. How they try to demoralize people, how they try to make it to where you can't talk. Can you talk about how you overcame that, and how you were able to build special connections with people, or build friendships and love? However you are able to overcome the state repression at visits, to build those strong connections with people?

Harold Taylor: I can tell you this story right here. I was arrested in New Orleans in 1972. I had jumped bail from the shooting in LA, myself, John Bowman, and Ray Boudreaux. Me and John Bowman were captured in New Orleans in 1972 along with Ruben Scott, and we were beaten. Tortured. They used cattle prods on us, shocked us under our armpits, between our legs, behind the ears. They beat us with slapjacks all up and down our legs, on our knees, on our shins. It was the most horrific place I have ever been in, and they kept us chained up. You slept with the chains on, and whenever they came to get you out of the cell, they dragged you out of the cell.

I stayed in that cell for two weeks before the judge took me out of the custody of the city police and put me into the custody of the Parish prison. Parish prison is no longer there in New Orleans. It was really a slave quarters where they bought and sold slaves, and it was old. It was built in the 1800s and was really an old prison. I stayed in there for three months, because me and John Bowman weren't going to sign extradition papers, which helped the state. Plus, we wanted to stay and testify for Ruben Scott on the five bank robberies that he confessed to under torture. He got four of them dismissed, one of them held, and I didn't see Ruben Scott until three years later, when they brought him to court to testify against me in LA on that shooting and Ruben refused to testify.

You've got to understand, he asked for an attorney. That's loyalty. That's comradery. Me and Ruben made that deal in New Orleans. We promised each other that we would testify to what the pigs are doing. No matter where we were at, we'll come testify. And they brought him to testify against me, but he flipped on them, and he testified on my behalf to the torture. And that's how the torture was squashed. That's how the case in San Francisco was squashed.

I'm saying that to say that the Parish prison was the most horrible place I've been. I've been to some jail houses, and most jail houses are basically the same. This place was unique. You had guards from Mississippi that couldn't even read or write. Inmates ran the jail. The inmates had knives, and they all knew it. They let inmates in the cell on me and John Bowman to rob us while we were in there, but they didn't know me and John had accumulated some weapons. They shut the door when they came in, and we didn't let them out. The things that they did to us to discourage and keep people from coming to see us, it's really crazy some people would do that to another human being. I suffer today with Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome. I have nightmares about being shot in the car or being tortured. I'll never get over it, but I got control over that. It was all worth it. Everything that got done in the past, I would do it again but this time probably better. Always learn.

dequi kioni-sadiki: Thank you, brother Harold. I think that is so important that you mention the torture and the isolation. This country won't acknowledge the existence of political prisoners, but there is a special treatment that they have for them when they get behind those walls, and that special treatment extends. I mean, they are particularly vicious, pernicious, degrading, dehumanizing, and humiliating to everyone who is held behind the walls, but it's also particularly so for people who are political prisoners.

I can only speak for myself and what I've seen in going to visit political prisoners. First of all, the buses are always filled with women. Like what Harold said about his mother. A mother might say, "I'm not going to visit my son or my daughter," but a girlfriend or a wife or a sister, they may not have that same sense of "I've got to lay eyes on him." They know this, and what they do is work to disintegrate those ties.

When I would go to see Sekou, the last place he was was in Clinton [correctional facility in upstate New York]. It was seven hours away, so if I wanted to visit him on Saturday, I'd have to get on the bus Friday night. The bus would come to Brooklyn at 9 o'clock Friday night, I'd get on the bus, it would make its stops in the Bronx, Queens, and Manhattan to pick people up. We'd get to Clinton at like 5 o'clock in the morning, and visiting hours don't start until 8 or 9. So, if you have worked all week long, you have children, you've got to pack stuff for the children to eat on the bus, you've got to spend money when you get inside the visiting room, you've

Attica Rebellion — a September 9, 1971 rebellion by thousands of prisoners at the New York state prison. Answering George Jackson's call in his writings for prisoners to take a revolutionary role, prisoners at Attica organized around a list of 27 demands regarding improvements in living conditions that were left unanswered. Many prisoners, like Joseph Little, who told a government panel, "I'm not for no penitentiary reform. I'm for abolishing the whole concept of penitentiary reform," saw the prison as a site of revolutionary warfare. New York Governor Rockerfeller and President Nixon ordered hundreds of state troopers and prison guards to take back the prison with force, leaving 10 correctional officers and 29 prisoners dead by police fire. Many prisoners were assassinated after the siege for their organizing, like Weather Underground-associated revolutionary Sam Melville. On September 17, the Weather Underground launched a retaliatory attack on the New York Department of Corrections, exploding a bomb near the commissioner's office. The communiqué accompanying the attack called the prison system an example of "how a society run by white racists maintains its control," with white supremacy being the main question white people have to face."

Malcolm X Grassroots Movement — an organization of Afrikans in America/New Afrikans whose mission is to defend the human rights of our people and promote self-determination in our community. "We understand that the collective institutions of white supremacy, patriarchy and capitalism have been at the root of our people's oppression. We understand that without community control and without the power to determine our own lives, we will continue to fall victim to genocide. Therefore, we seek to heighten our consciousness about self-determination as a human right and a solution to our colonization. While organizing around our principles of unity, we are building a network of Black/New Afrikan activists and organizers committed to the protracted struggle for the liberation of the New Afrikan Nation—By Any Means Necessary!" *For more information*: freethelandmxgm.org

Black Liberation Army — an underground Marxist-Leninist, black-nationalist guerrilla organization composed of former Black Panthers (BPP) and Republic of New Afrika (RNA) members who served above ground before going underground, that took up arms for the liberation and self-determination of Black people in the United States. By 1970, police and FBI sabotage (COINTELPRO), infiltration, state repression, and assassinations had significantly undermined the BPP. This convinced many former party members of the desirability of underground existence, seeing that a new period of violent repression by the U.S federal and local government was at hand. According to Geronimo Pratt (AKA Geronimo ji Jaga), the BLA "as a movement concept pre-dated and was broader than the BPP," suggesting that it was a refuge for ex-Panthers rather than a new organization formed through schism. And according to Assata Shakur's autobiography, "the Black Liberation Army was not a centralized, organized group with a common leadership and chain of command.

committee and friend to George, who sent her the book *Soledad Brother: The Prison Letters of George Jackson*. On August 7, 1970, George Jackson's 17-year-old brother Jonathan Jackson burst into a Marin County courtroom with an automatic weapon, freed three prisoners, including Ruchell Magee, and took a judge, district attorney, and three jurors hostage to demand the release of the Soledad Brothers. Police killed Jonathan, the judge, and wounded three others in the ensuing chase. On August 21, 1971, George pulled a 9 mm pistol from beneath a wig and said: "Gentlemen, the dragon has come," quoting Vietnamese revolutionary Ho Chi Minh, and ordered prisoners' cells opened, escaped to the yard, and was murdered by a guard from a guard tower. George finished writing the book *Blood in My Eye*, which was published in 1972, just days before his escape and death. *Blood in My Eye* is a masterpiece of urban guerrilla theory, political economy, and theories of armed Black liberation.

Ruchell Cinque Magee — already sentenced to life imprisonment, Ruchell was a witness in court for another prisoner and participated in Jonathan Jackson's Marin Civic Center armed rebellion, which resulted in his second life sentence, even though he was acquitted of his charges at trial. When Jonathan stormed the courthouse and began distributing weapons to Ruchell and William Christmas, Ruchell told Jonathan, "Get these chains off me, I'm a free man." Ruchell was imprisoned between the ages of 16 and 83, when he was released in 2023, making him one of the longest held political prisoners in the world. Becoming a promiment jailhouse lawyer, he was recognized as an activist and advocate for Black prisoners. According to author Dan Berger, Ruchell became "arguably the most vocal prisoner of the period" at San Quentin, using his knowledge of the law to focus on the cruel realities of prison life and advance the notion that prisons furthered and were a form of slavery. Berger writes that "Magee and his small but vocal collection of supporters" viewed him as a slave resisting bondage via open rebellion. Ruchell adopted the name "Cinque" from the enslaved African Joseph Cinqué who led an 1839 slave revolt. Ruchell passed away on October 17, 2023, only 81 days after his release from prison

Angela Davis — an American Marxist and feminist political activist, philosopher, academic, and author. A longtime member of the Communist Party USA (CPUSA), she was also affiliated with the Los Angeles chapter of the Black Panther Party, while a philosophy professor at UCLA. A leader in the Soledad Brothers Defense Committee, after Jonathan Jackson attempted to liberate the Soledad Brothers through an attack on the Marin County Civic Center in 1970, an arrest warrant for Angela was issued after it came to light that she had bought sevaral of the guns Jonathan used in the attack. She was captured by the FBI and released on bail after a 16 month international "Free Angela" campaign. Angela was acquitted of the charges in June 1972. Angela was twice the Communist Party's candidate for vice president. In 1997, she co-founded Critical Resistance, an organization working to abolish the prison industrial complex. Angela's books and theories are a foundation in the prison abolition movement.

got to spend money when the bus comes back to pick you up. You'd visit from 9 to 3, but sometimes the visiting would be cut short if the visiting room was too crowded. Even though you rode on a bus for seven hours. And that has happened to me. I would have my visit cut short because there were other people there that wanted to visit loved ones and there's not enough room in the visiting hours. You get up there at 5 in the morning, they start processing for visiting intake at 8, you finish at 3, the bus comes to get you at 4, by time I got home to Brooklyn it's 11 o'clock Saturday night. So, that's 26 hours, because I already left at 9 o'clock Friday night.

I was fortunate in that my children were grown. I wasn't raising children at the time, so that made it possible. But what happens if you have young children, and then you get up there and you deal with the humiliation and the harassment. Mogadishu and I went one time to visit Sundiata Acoli in Maryland. We were in the parking lot, and this young woman had her little girl with her going to visit her man. The baby was like 3 years old. They wouldn't let her in, because the 3-year-old had on a sleeveless dress. They said that that was against policy for a 3-year-old to have on a sleeveless dress. She was getting ready to turn around, but thankfully we saw her and we gave her one of our "Free Sekou" t-shirts and told her just turn it inside out. "Put it on the baby." It came down to her ankles, but they could no longer say that she had on a sleeveless dress, so she could have the visit. And she said, "Well, what do you want for this?" We said, "Nothing. Just tell people that there are political prisoners in these prisons across the country."

So, being politicized and understanding that, just like what Brother Harold said, they mean to break you inside, they mean to break you on the outside, and they mean for you not to come back. And the only way to do that, and I've seen that where sisters will say, "This is why I don't come here. I'm not coming back here." But then some sisters would be like, "I'm coming here," because they knew how deadly it was. At Clinton, they murder people up there. If you don't lay eyes on your family member, like Harold said, if you don't get phone calls from people, they can disappear them, kill them, bury them, and you don't know anything. It's a horrible situation.

Being politicized—which is what the system works so hard against—people being politicized, which is why they came so hard on the Black

Panther Party, because they were politicizing people, they were politicizing people by the fact that they were feeding children. People were saying, "Wait a minute, this country that calls itself the richest country in the world can spend money on all of this stuff, but they can't feed my baby, but these young people can?" That was politicizing people. They don't want people to be politicized, because then you start looking and understanding the contradictions, and then saying, "Well, wait a minute. I have a stake in this, so I have to fight to change it."

Eric King: One of the things that I really admire about my wife, and that I just love so much, is that when they would come to visit me, they would pack extra clothes for any wives or girlfriends or daughters. And the cops hated it, the cops absolutely hated that sort of solidarity amongst visitors. If this is an okay question to ask, dequi, could you tell me about your first visit with Sekou? What you remember? Or any positive memories from visits that helped you?

dequi kioni-sadiki: No, no, you know what I tell people? There's nothing they can say or do that's going to make me cry more or miss Sekou more. I miss everything, I miss my life with him, so there's no question that people can ask or mentioning his name that's going to make me feel any worse than I already feel. I think it's important to talk about Sekou, because he lived a life, so I don't want people to be nursing my feelings so that they think they can't say anything about him. I'm struggling through grief and trauma, but I have a whole community. Harold is part of my community, my family, there are lots of people across this country that are helping me through, so you didn't hurt me.

It just made me smile, because I've been visiting political prisoners for a long time before I met Sekou, who came to New York in 2009, because he was paroled to New York state after maxing out his federal time. He came to New York in 2009, so I went to visit him. That's what we do. Me and Anne Lamb went to visit him. She's part of New York City Jericho. I remember his smile... And I think this sticks out for all of the political prisoners, to juxtapose their humanity.

People who were in the Black Panther Party talk about being motivated by great love for the people, which is why they committed their lives to struggle. You see that when you visit our political prisoners. When you juxtapose the image and the idea and the writings that this state creates.

People, Places, Events, & Organizations

Watts Rebellion — a major Black uprising and rebellion in the Watts neighborhood and its surrounding areas of Los Angeles from August 11 to 16, 1965 against the police and white supremacy, after a particularly egregious instance of racist police brutality. Over the six days, there were 34 deaths, 1,032 injuries, 3,438 arrests, and over $40 million in property damage from 769 buildings and businesses damaged and looted and 208 buildings completely destroyed, including 14 damaged public buildings and 1 public building completely destroyed.

Marcus Garvey — a Jamaican political activist in the struggle for Black liberation, a major figure in the internationalist pan-African movement, and the founder and first President-General of the Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League (UNIA). His theories came to be known as Garveyism. Working in Kingston in his early years, he got involved in trade unionism before living briefly in Costa Rica, Panama, and England. On returning to Jamaica, he founded the UNIA in 1914. In 1916, he moved to the United States and established a UNIA branch in New York City's Harlem district. Emphasising unity between Africans and the African diaspora, he campaigned for an end to European colonial rule in Africa and advocated the political unification of the continent. Believing that Black people needed to be financially independent from white-dominated societies, Garvey launched various businesses in the U.S., including the Negro Factories Corporation and Negro World newspaper. In 1923 Garvey was convicted of mail fraud for selling the company's stock and he was imprisoned in the United States Penitentiary, Atlanta for nearly two years. After his sentence was commuted, he was deported to Jamaica in 1927. Garveyism became significantly influential in global pan-African, anti-colonial, and Black liberation movements.

George Jackson & Jonathan Jackson — George was a revolutionary prisoner and Minister of Defense for the Black Panther Party. During his first years at San Quentin State Prison, where he was imprisoned at age 20 for stealing $70 from a gas station on a sentence of one year to life, George became involved in revolutionary activity, after becoming acquainted with the works of Marx, Lenin, Mao, and Fanon. On January 17, 1970, a prison officer shot and killed three Black prisoners during a set-up fight with members of the Aryan Brotherhood. Following their assassinations, thirteen black prisoners began a hunger strike in the hopes of securing an investigation. A grand jury was convened three days later that exonerated the prison guard after permitting no black prisoners to testify. Thirty minutes after the grand jury decision, another prison guard was thrown off a cell-block tier to his death, and George Jackson, Fleeta Drumgo, and John Clutchette—who came to be known as the Soledad Brothers—were indicted. Many revolutionaries would join the Soledad Brothers Defense Committee, such as Angela Davis who would become the leader of the

Black August is about, and that's what our lives must be about.

Harold Taylor: That's right. Until the day we die.

Libetie Valance: Y'all are amazing and total inspirations. Thank you so much for your time tonight. It's been amazing. And thank you, Eric. Huge appreciation to you for helping to make this happen and carrying the conversation forward.

dequi kioni-sadiki: And thank you to our listening audience for being here and participating. We appreciate that we are nothing without the people, because we do have the power.

Harold Taylor: In the words of Mao Zedong, "Dare to struggle, dare to win." That's always been our model in the Black Panther Party. It's about the struggle. Struggle first, struggle consistently, and resist at every turn.

Anytime Sekou was transferred, just like Nuh [Washington], you would think they were like that movie character, Hannibal Lector. They put the black box on their wrists and their waists, and chains on their ankles, and helicopters and army trucks, you know, those black vans the police have. And SWAT.

If you don't know about these people, it's like, "Damn, what the fuck did they do?" Who are they looking for? Was it some kind of mass murderer or bomber or a terrorist or something? Although we know the United States is a terrorist. But then you sit at a table in a visiting room, and you see their humanity. You see their smile. You hear them talk. You laugh with them. I found Sekou gentle and loving. I found him funny. And for all the years that I had went to visit political prisoners, I always kept it above-board, because I didn't want to mislead brothers in any kind of way, or flirt with them in any kind of way. But I always felt that there was something, they're all special, but there was that extra sweet that Sekou Odinga had, if I could say that right. I felt something different. I didn't say anything, but I just really enjoyed my visit with him. He came in 2009, and in two years we were married. We married on June 17, 2011. So, it's the humanity. You see that right away.

And then you see the impact that our our political prisoners have on the community. People have mad respect for all the people that I've gone to see in prison. The people that are held there, they have mad respect for them, because of not only who they are, but what they continue to do.

There are certain words in the English language that I just hate because the language of this land is really violent and dehumanizing and it's really problematic. But I do want to say that our political prisoners are not languishing. They are working, they're just working in a different environment. They're organizing. They're teaching. They're mentoring. They're loving. They're supporting. They're doing different things with a different population, but it's the same kind of work they did before they went inside. I think that the language that we use around political prisoners needs to change, because ain't none of them languishing. Sekou and I couldn't go anywhere without people seeing him. When brothers would come home, the first thing they would do is ask somebody for his number, and they'd be calling our home, or calling his cell phone, and we'd be on a train, we'd be walking the street, wherever we went across this country. And that's not just with Sekou, that's true of people, like when

Harold mentioned Nuh [Washington], I've had so many brothers over the years mention Nuh, and Nuh's been gone for more than 20 years.

Harold Taylor: The thing about political prisoners is that we all were studying the whole time we were in jail. Studying. We had access to the law library, so we used that. We helped other prisoners who couldn't even read or write. We wrote their letters for them to their families. We were always organizing. That's why today they never put political prisoners in general population. Inmates love political prisoners. Inmates are no threat to a political prisoner. It's the guards and the police. People that are running the place. They want to break you, and you know that they want to break you.

But I won that case in Los Angeles. I beat that case. I had six counts of attempted murder and eight counts of assault on police officers, and all those counts went away in court when I was acquitted by a jury of twelve people. The Black Panther Party in Los Angeles changed the jury selection in Los Angeles. We demanded in my trial that I get a jury of my peers, my immediate community, and not take me to Torrance or to Santa Monica. No, you take me right here in South Central where my people are and try me in front of them. And they did that. They had to go all the way to the state supreme court. We won the case. So, jury selection was done by your driver's license, but that driver's license had to be in this designated area where you were arrested, and they had to be homeowners. I'd been living in that area, and that's where the jury pool was selected.

The fight continues on all levels, and political prisoners are always fighting. We never stop fighting. We fight the laws. We fight discrimination in prisons and jails, and in prison we had to fight even for blankets. When they brought me to San Francisco from Florida on that indictment, on that murder, I hadn't been in a jailhouse in 30 years, and they took me straight to the hole. But when I got there, inmates sent me care packages who didn't even know me, but knew of me, and they all told me, "I want to thank you, brothers, for these blankets because we know if it wasn't for you guys we wouldn't have these blankets." I say that to say the fight continues on all levels. No matter the situation, you've got to continue to resist and fight. But you've got to pick your fights, and I picked the ones I could win. Strategy and tactics applies to all of our lives, and once I joined the Party and learned those things, and then became a member of the Black Liberation Army, it was an extension from one level

Sekou was in prison for 33 and a half years, and when he came home every police precinct in New York City was notified that he was home. We need to remember the struggle, the commitment, the sacrifice that people have made, just like the state remembers their resistance. People are glorifying the Black Panther Party today—sweatshirts, movies, "Wakanda forever." People think that's the Panthers, but there's still people in prison today because they refuse to renounce or denounce the Black Panther Party, just because of their association.

Harold Taylor: Dr. Curtis Austin is writing a book on the San Francisco 8, which should be out next year. And I'm going to write an autobiography on my life, my life story. That particular book is going to be called *A Different Kind of Cat*. That's the name of that book on my life story. But still, I just want to make sure to educate young people, to let them know that we're still here, and you can talk to us. You can come up and touch us and talk to us. That's what we're here for. I work for the people, like I said. I don't work for individuals. I appreciate you having me on and giving me the opportunity to see my dear sister, dequi.

dequi kioni-sadiki: Absolutely brother, I love you.

Eric King: I'd like to just remind people, before we sign off, what Harold was saying. These prisons are still full, and there are elder Panthers and BLA members. All these activists are still here, and we can gain wisdom from them, we can gain knowledge from them, and we can grow as a community. Please, let's use these tools, and let's get to know these people and hear their stories. Prisoners are available, they're here.

Thank you both so much. This was a real honor. I love you both, and I thank you both so much.

dequi kioni-sadiki: I see you, Eric, and in this time of Black August, study, sacrifice, read, fast whatever you're fasting from—it could be fasting from social media for a week, it could be fasting from alcohol, it could be fasting from the things that don't do your body or your mind or your spirit any good. But study. You've got to have context. The only way to be in this movement is to understand that it's a protracted struggle and that we must have solidarity with peoples around the world, because what happens here is the same that our government is doing to other people around the world. So, study, sacrifice, commitment, fasting, that's what

destroyed the Black Panther Party, telling young people not to go. And they scared everybody by the way they did us. More Panthers were killed in LA than anywhere in the country, something like 25 or 30, mostly by the LAPD. So, the struggle here has always been hectic. Right now, there's no acknowledgement that the Black Panther Party ever existed.

Eric King: We've only got a couple minutes left, but I'd like to ask both of you if there's anything you're working on right now, if there's any projects you want to talk about, any prisoners you want to talk about, any friends, family, or Sekou's book that may be coming out hopefully soon, his memoirs. Anything you guys want to bring up, please, please talk about it now.

dequi kioni-sadiki: Well, asha bandele is co-writing Sekou's memoir with him, and we're going to be working together to finish it up with some last minute things, and then hopefully it'll be out in 2025. I am part of the Spirit of Mandela Coalition, which Sekou was a part of, too, and they're organizing a People's Senate that is like different regions around the country organizing people, networking with people, so people can know what is going on in different parts of the country. Because we can't be everywhere, but working with people helps us to understand what's going on in different areas. You know, one struggle, different front. It helps us to know what is going on. There are various Curb Fests in support of political prisoners happening around the country. There's one in Boston, there's one in New York, there's one in Philly. You can do a Google search to find out where. There's an ongoing campaign for Mumia [Abu-Jamal] and for Imam Jamil Al-Amin. These are brothers that have been in prison for decades. Imam Jamil has been in since the early 2000s. The same judge that convicted and sentenced Kamau is the same one that sentenced Imam Jamil in Atlanta for doing the same thing, what Brother Harold was talking about, cleaning up the neighborhood.

And the person that allegedly shot the sheriff, they said was shot, yet when Imam Jamil was captured, he had no bullet wounds. The FBI was known as saying, "We finally got him." Because of who he is, they've had eyes on him. Because they don't forget.

In short, the answer to your question, I think, if I could leave the audience with anything, it's that we must have as long a memory as the state does, because they don't forget. They don't forget shit. They do not forget.

to the next level, because in the Black Panther Party, in the rules of the Party it says you can never join any other organization other than the Black Liberation Army. So, when the federal government destroyed the Black Panther Party, the Black Liberation Army came about. But the Black Liberation Army has always been here, from the moment they took that first African off the continent. They created Nat Turner, Denmark Vesey, all those great soldiers and warriors, the forgotten ones. We always resisted. We never fold under pressure. They would have young people think and believe that, but we never fold. We always rise. We're the most relentless people on the planet. I love this struggle, and I'll be in this thing until the day I die.

Eric King: I have two questions from people that are tuning in, so I'm going to run them by both of you. The first question is based off a comment that you said, Herold, and dequi, you co-signed on it, it's about how visibility on prisoners can help keep them alive, how the more visible a prisoner is inside, the less likely they are to get fucked up by the administration. So, if you could just expand on that, about how the extra eyes keep people safe, the listener would really appreciate that.

Harold Taylor: Well, another thing lawyers do a great job at. I had a lawyer, her name was Beth Lizzy, and she passed away, and I loved her to death. She was a country girl from Nebraska, a little redheaded country girl, smart as a whip, dressed like a hippie but very deceptive. She made sure that I was out of my cell once a day, every day, that I got a chance to come out and exercise, walk up and down the tier for at least 30 minutes every day. They wouldn't let you do that unless somebody was there representing you. Anybody that's been in jail knows that you've got to file writs and motions to get different things, and you could do it from your cell. You don't have nothing but time. Nothing. It's one long day and one long night. You don't remember yesterday. It's always looking forward, and survival is a necessity.

Inmates were your best protection, because they give you a heads up. Political prisoners get more information than other prisoners, because people want to talk to you about what makes you the way you are, especially young people. And they're willing to do things for you, smuggle a little stuff for you, smuggle you an onion or a tomato —"Wow, a tomato," you know. I didn't see a tomato for a year. But little things like that just help. You'd play games with the pigs, but you never let them know they

hurt you. You never ask them for shit, you don't complain, and you don't snivel, because they want you to grovel anyway. Everything you say and do, they walk behind your cell, back there where the pipes are and stuff, and they sit back there, and they put microphones there to listen to conversations. It's always something going on in jail.

And I was in jail with Geronimo Pratt. We did a year together, along with the members of the SLA. They were behind the door, but we'd see them every day. The pigs tell you not to talk to them. Hell, what are you going to threaten me with, the hole? I'm already in the damn hole. The hole is just another part of the jail. You'll just be by yourself, that's all.

Eric King: I hope you heard what Harold said. Don't talk to these fuckers.

Harold Taylor: Don't talk to these bitches. Don't talk to them in jail or prison. Do not.

Eric King: They're not your friends.

Harold Taylor: You've got the right to remain silent. That's a big heads up, right there. What's it going to do for you?

dequi kioni-sadiki: And they trick people into talking to them. They are not your friends. They're information gatherers. What might seem like an innocent question is never an innocent question. It's always about gathering information.

I want to expand on what I think Harold said about having eyes on people. If your loved one gets beat up, and you don't come to visit for a month, you'll never know that. But if you go to visit a couple of times a month, or however long, or if they can make a phone call, you write a letter. When you visit, at least in New York, we took pictures. I never visited Sekou in federal prison, and I can't remember if you do take pictures in federal. I remember visiting Sundiata and taking pictures. So, all the eyes help. Like people say, two heads are better than one. If you keep everything in your head, when you speak it to someone else, it helps you to process it and think about it in a different way. It's the same thing with the eyes. It's for your benefit. It's for your loved ones' benefit, but it's also to hold the prison administration accountable, to say, "We care. You may not care about this person, but we care, and we are going to make sure that they're

the voices. I'm with her, and we were in the car last night, and she played me all these songs. She played me a song by Imani Black called "Free Palestine," and it was talking about f— this and f— that, y'all doing this, the government and these politicians.

You need the poets, the writers, the authors, the organizers, the lawyers, the doctors, the working people, to amplify the voices. We need books, we need zines, we need newspaper articles, we need radio shows, we need every organ that's available. And sometimes we've got to make our own in order to get the voices out, because the master's tools are never going to be used to free the people. But we've got to use everything, and we've got to challenge people. We've got to support the people that do the work to support political prisoners, those artists like M1 and Dead Prez. They've always been down for political prisoners. Immortal Technique, Nefertiti, they did a great job. We've got to support these artists and build them up, because they do the work of resistance through their art.

Harold Taylor: I just want to say one thing that's really key. I never work for individuals, I work for the people. That's who I love, the people first. I never forgot who I worked for. Many people in the Party forgot who they worked for. But being loyal to the people is like what we had in the Party. You must have an undying love for the people to continue this struggle. But the key thing, to everything you were talking about, sister, the information has to get out there to the people, because information is the raw material for new ideas. At the same time, young people have to learn to not talk to the fucking police. Step one, don't talk to the cops. When they ask you questions, that means they don't know, so don't volunteer any information, don't converse with them at all. That's the key thing.

You've got to get back in community, and let the people know that you don't have to fear us, because we work for you, not against you. We've got to make sure that we get that information out to the pimps, the prostitutes, the drug dealers, that you can't do that here. That's how we clean this out. This neighborhood where I am now is full of drugs, but when I was in the Party we cleared all that out. Figueroa Street right over here is what they call the "ho strip." There's no pimps and prostitutes on Figueroa, because we ran all those cats out of here. You've got to get it organized and come back.

But the government helped flood the community with gangs, and they

Harold Taylor: They offered me a $150,000 to relocate me and my family anywhere in the country to lie on my friend, and I told them, "I can't do that. I can't lie on my friend for you or for nobody else. I'm not going to lie."

Eric King: For any young revolutionaries watching, please do not participate in this life if you're not willing to do that time. Please do not snitch on anyone.

dequi kioni-sadiki: Let me just add that Kamau Sadiki is in prison today simply because of his loyalty to the Black Freedom Struggle, his loyalty and his commitment to his daughter and the mother of his daughter, because they offered him the reward [for Assata] and they told him, when the FBI came to visit him in 2001 or 2002, they offered him the reward, and they said, "We want you to help lure her away, so we can get her." He said the same thing that Harold said. And they told him if he did not cooperate, we're going to make sure you spend the rest of your life in prison. What did they do upon that refusal? They charged him with a 30 year old crime that they had to drop the charges before, 30 years ago, because there was no evidence against him. This cold case was reopened, and they convicted him, and he's serving now two life sentences plus 10 years.

Eric King: We had Kamau's daughter, K'Sisay, on our first panel talk to help highlight her father's case. I encourage people to get involved in his freedom campaign. I want to shout out my lawyers. I had really badass lawyers, Sandy Freeman, Erica Unger, and Z Williams. Thank you for keeping me alive inside the supermax.

I want to ask you both, one of the purposes of *Rattling the Cages*, this book, was to raise up voices that people may have forgotten, to keep alive the spirit and the heart of these revolutionaries that put their lives on the line. What do you think is missing right now, or what do you think could be done to raise up voices more? What do we need to do to amplify the voices or the lives of those inside right now?

dequi kioni-sadiki: Well, like Kwame Ture says, "Organize, organize, organize." I'm with our friend, Nancy, right now. Palestinian Existence is Resistance is the company she works for. The Malcolm X Grassroots Movement did a hip-hop tour for Black August, using artists to amplify

okay. If they can't come to the visiting room, why can't they come to the visiting room? If they come, and they're all beat up, why?" It's making sure they're alive, because sometimes those pigs kill people. Keeping eyes. It's the ties that bind. It's like the inside out. Like when we're talking about Black August, that's what it is from the inside to the outside, from the outside to the inside.

Eric King: For people listening, I'd like to make a comparison. We wouldn't know about these uprisings if they weren't videotaped, if there's not books about them, if there's not a way for us to see them happening. It's the same way in prison. It's the same way. You don't know what's going on in there unless you are paying attention and showing up.

With that, dequi, I'd like to start with you, and then we go to Herold on this next question, which is from a listener, asking what sort of situations have you found where you needed to call the jail and check on someone, or you need to do a call-in campaign to get them health care, you need to do a call-in campaign to get them moved, or any situation like that, when have you found that necessary, and when have you found it helpful?

dequi kioni-sadiki: Well, there have been call-in campaigns for if someone is not feeling well and they need to see a doctor, why haven't they seen a doctor? Like Kamau Sadiki, who is having serious health problems, there's always a campaign to call to not amputate somebody's leg—like Mutulu [Shakur], they wanted to amputate his foot, but he said no. A lot of times, it has to do with medical stuff, but the other stuff, like what Howard was saying with the lawyer and the law, lawyers do the work, too, but only if someone is getting that info outside about not being able to go to commissary, not being able to go outside, not being able to get visitors. So, the lawyer does some of those things.

Even though the prison won't give you information, the fact that we call lets them know that people are watching, and those calls and those faxes and those emails disrupt their day. If you flood their fax machine, that's tying up time. If you call into their office, then that means that somebody has to answer those phone calls. They won't give you information, but it lets them know that you're calling about so and so, you're calling about the mistreatment, you're calling about the neglect, you're calling about the well-being, you're calling about whatever it is, the incident. We've had call campaigns. We've had fax campaigns. We've had lots of things where

lawyers get involved to demand.

Howard is right, the movement attorneys were important, and we need more of them, much more. It was movement attorneys in those days that held a line for our political prisoners. That's what helped to stop Sekou from being tortured when he was captured and held. They heard Bill Kunstler's voice booming down the hallway, and they had to stop torturing him. It's the lawyers that do what they do, and it's the people that do what we do, but it's to say that we've got eyes on our loved ones, and we've got eyes on you officials. We've got eyes all over you.

Harold Taylor: They brought me to San Francisco. I was talking to Hank [Jones] and Ray Boudreaux, because they were in the cell next to me, and the police told me not to talk to them. For 30 years? The hell you talking about, I can't talk to them? So, they moved me from that cell. I thought they were going to just move me from that cell, but they moved me out of the jail to a jail out in the county. Not the lawyer, nobody knew where I was, and they took me over there to solitary confinement and put me in there. They took my commissary and everything. Well, I wasn't sniveling. Just give me my little bed roll and I'll go in the cell. I stayed there for three days, and my lawyer couldn't find me. You know who found me? Inmates told their people that they had me there. I told them nobody knows where I am. I said, "They can kill me." And the inmates called out to the people, and let them know what was going on there, how they were treating me.

It's real important that you open those communication lines. I had the same incident in New Orleans. In New Orleans they weren't going to take us to court. The inmates went over there and told them that they've got three men over there that they beat, and they've been there since Friday, and they've been torturing them. The judge asked the district attorney if they had three more people, and he said, "Yeah, but they were security risks." The judge said he had to bring us over there to arraign us. Well, we had to carry Ruben Scott, because his arm was broken and his legs were messed up from being beaten. Me and John Bowman were chained up, and we carried him. We had to walk across the street from the city jail to Parish prison in chains with the SWAT team surrounding us, because they thought somebody was coming to get us.

Then we go over there to the Parish Prison, and the court, the judge remands us back into the custody of the New Orleans Police Department.

When they get us back over there, they start torturing us again, and they had been told not to talk to any of us without a lawyer being present, but they didn't give a damn about that. The government told them to do what they had to do, because they wanted Herman Bell, they wanted Ray Boudreaux, they wanted Hank Jones, and they wanted other people, and they said that we weren't going to leave until we talked about it. I never mentioned any of them cats, but when I got over to the jail, they put us in a giant bird cage, and they fed us with maggots in the rice and beans. You had to pick maggots out to eat it. I went in there weighing 195 pounds—I'm 6' 2.5"—I came out of there weighing 134 pounds.

When they extradited me back to California, I went from one hole to another. In California it was a different deal, because they already knew me here, so I just went to the hole, and when my case came up, I got a severance from my co-defendants, because I was accused of being the shooter. I said, "Since I'm the shooter, I'll go to trial. If they can't get me, they can't get nobody." So, I brought the case on self-defense—there's a self-defense law California, so you have a right to defend yourself, even from the police—and they showed where the police conspired to come and kill us, and they found me not guilty, and they let my co-defendants go.

dequi kioni-sadiki: Something I want to add to what Brother Harold just said is the level of commitment, comradeship, loyalty, brotherhood, and sisterhood. Like what Harold just said of his experience, he said he severed the case, because he was going to use himself to say, "If they can't get me, they can't get you." When Sekou got captured, first they didn't know who he was, and then when they found out, they were beating the shit out of him, flushing his head in the toilet, putting cigarettes out on his legs, pulling out his toenails. They did all kinds of stuff, beating him with those batons. They beat him into a three-month hospital stay. But they was asking about Assata [Shakur], and they were asking about Abdul Majid, and he was not giving them up. I know of people that took a bid, a brother who is now gone, who took a bid in order to prevent a sister who had children from being swept up. There's a level of loyalty and camaraderie and love and commitment to each other that just does not exist today. Because today people will snitch in a heartbeat.

People say snitches get stitches and all this other stuff, but you let people get busted, and they tell you, "If you don't cooperate you're going to get a hundred years." They will snitch on you. They will talk about their mama.